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Who are Agency Ethics Officers and how can they help you?

There are certain employees in state government who have taken on the extra responsibility to act as liaisons between their agencies and the State Ethics Commission - these employees are known as agency Ethics Officers. Designated by their appointing authorities, Ethics Officers maintain a close relationship with the Ethics Commission concerning the agency's ethics program and assist agency leaders in their ethics responsibilities. In addition, Ethics Officers counsel employees concerning ethics and standards of conduct matters and have the authority to issue written advisory opinions approving outside employment.

Every state employee may directly contact the Ethics Commission regarding an ethics issue, but you may also ask your Ethics Officer for advice. In addition to their knowledge of the state ethics code, Ethics Officers also have firsthand knowledge of any agency specific rules or policies that may exist. Your Ethics Officer is often times in the best position to counsel you on any agency specific ethics rules.

Remember, every state employee is responsible for their actions. The agency Ethics Officer may directly advise you on ethics questions or refer you to the Ethics Commission for more information. Seeking advice from your Ethics Officer or from the Ethics Commission before you act is always the best policy.

To contact your agency Ethics Officer, [click here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are state employees and special state appointees allowed to attend political fundraisers?

A. State employees and special state appointees may attend fundraisers. However, they may not engage in political activity on state time, nor may they solicit political contributions from persons they supervise or from persons who have a business relationship with their agencies.

In addition, if you are an appointing authority, special state appointee or state employee with purchasing or procurement authority, you may not solicit political contributions on behalf of any candidate for public office. What does this mean as far as attending political fundraisers? You may attend a fundraiser so long as you do not solicit political contributions in any manner. To view the full text of the Political Activity rule, [42 IAC 1-5-4](#), please visit the Ethics Commission's Web site,

Q. Recently, I was on state business at the work site of a company that has a business relationship with my agency and was offered a cup of coffee by the company's receptionist. Would it have been OK to accept the coffee?

A. Yes. There is an exception to the gift rule, which allows state employees to accept nominal refreshments that may be offered to them while they are conducting official state business at a workplace of a person who has a business relationship with the employee's agency.

Q. Are employees who make complaints about their agencies to the Ethics Commission protected from retaliation?

A. It is unlawful to retaliate or threaten to retaliate against an employee who files an ethics complaint with the Ethics Commission or the Inspector General, or provides information to either office, or who testifies at an Ethics Commission proceeding. However, a state officer, an employee, or a special state appointee may take appropriate action against an employee who takes any of the above actions in bad faith, or if the employee knowingly or recklessly provides false information or testimony to the Commission.

Q. What role does the Inspector General play in regards to ethics?

A. The Office of the Inspector General and the Ethics Commission work together to promote the ethical conduct of state officers, employees, special state appointees, and persons who have a business relationship with a state agency.

The Inspector General also:

- Implements a code of ethics, which outlines the ethics rules in addition to state law.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Receives and investigates complaints alleging a violation of the code of ethics.
- Represents the State in public hearings before the Ethics Commission.
- Ensures that employees, state officers, special state appointees or persons who have a business relationship with an agency are properly trained in the code of ethics.
- Provides informal advisory opinions interpreting ethics laws and rules.

Q. May I accept outside employment or a moonlighting opportunity?

A. If the position involves compensation of substantial value, would conflict with your present duties, would require you to disclose confidential state information, or would involve using your position to obtain unwarranted privileges or exemptions, you may not accept the position without written approval from your agency Appointing Authority, Ethics Officer, or the Ethics Commission.

Q. What happens if an ethics violation occurs?

A. The Commission may hold a public hearing to determine if a violation has happened or the Commission may reach an agreed settlement with the violator. The Commission may take any of the following actions:

- (1) Impose a civil penalty not to exceed three times the value of any benefit received from the violation.
- (2) Cancel a contract.
- (3) Bar a person from entering into a contract with an agency or a state officer for a period specified by the Commission.
- (4) Order restitution or disgorgement.
- (5) Reprimand, suspend, or terminate an employee or a special state appointee.
- (6) Reprimand or recommend the impeachment of a state officer.
- (7) Bar a person from future state employment as an employee or future appointment as a special state appointee.
- (8) Revoke a license or permit issued by an agency.
- (9) Bar a person from obtaining a license or permit issued by an agency.
- (10) Revoke the registration of a person registered as a lobbyist under **IC 4 2-8**
- (11) Bar a person from future lobbying activity with a state officer or agency.

Please note: Formal advisory opinions may be found on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.in.gov/ethics/advis/>.

If you have an ethics question, please [click here](#).

2006 Ethics Training Schedule

All classes are held in the State Conference Center (IGC South).
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Please check the Conference Center Directory the day of class as rooms are subject to change. To register for a class, [click here](#).

Ethics Orientation

10:00- 11:00 a.m.

September 12 Conference Center Room 14
November 14 Conference Center Room 17

Ethics for Supervisors and Managers

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

September 27 Conference Center Room 4
November 15 Conference Center Room 4

Any of the above classes count as orientation or refresher training.

These classes also are offered online at:

[<http://www.in.gov/ethics/training/>](http://www.in.gov/ethics/training/).

Remember!

Ethics training is mandatory for new employees and special state appointees within six weeks of their date of hire. Thereafter, every employee and special state appointee is required to have ethics refresher training every two years. Please review the following ethics training requirements:

42 IAC 1-4-1 Training requirements

Sec. 1.

(a) All state officers, employees, and special state appointees, shall be properly trained in the code of ethics as described in this article. All persons who have a business relationship with a state agency are obligated to abide by the code of ethics.

(b) Each agency's appointing authority shall do the following:

- (1) Require all new employees and special state appointees to participate in ethics training within six (6) weeks of the employee's starting employment and the special state appointee's appointment date with the agency.
- (2) Require all employees and special state appointees to participate in ethics training at least every two (2) years during an employee's and special state appointee's tenure with the agency.
- (3) Maintain documentation to demonstrate an employee's and special state appointee's compliance with subdivisions (1) and (2).